

**R**ESOURCES FOR CHANGE **20** years' positive change through people

# The Asset Transfer Toolkit

By  
RESOURCES for CHANGE



*“Understanding what’s Important”*

Funded by:



# Toolkit for Asset Transfer

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## Toolkit Introduction

This Toolkit has been developed by [Resources for Change](#) (R4C) to provide a straightforward, starting point process for groups or communities in Powys who are considering whether, or not, to take on the responsibility of managing an asset. Such assets are often, but not always, ones which are being disposed of by the County Council.

The Toolkit deals with the process to follow for transferring *capital assets*, i.e. buildings, land and equipment, but does not deal with the transfer of *services* delivered to the public, although it is the case that some capital assets provide a venue from which public and other services are delivered. This Toolkit has been developed from the learning that took place during the process used to undertake a feasibility study for [Llanwddyn Community Centre](#) Powys. During this feasibility study process, local people considered whether they could manage the community asset and, if they could, how they would do it. More information about how the community of Llanwddyn managed the process of Asset Transfer is highlighted throughout the document.

It should be read in conjunction with the [Transfer Guide for Communities: A toolkit for developing and managing services and assets](#), which is Powys County Council's own toolkit on *asset transfer*, and in conjunction with the information on Community Asset Transfer on the County Council website. We have also listed some other useful sources of information and support at the end of the Toolkit.

**This document is for guidance only and does not replace the need to seek advice from qualified professionals at various stages of the process.**



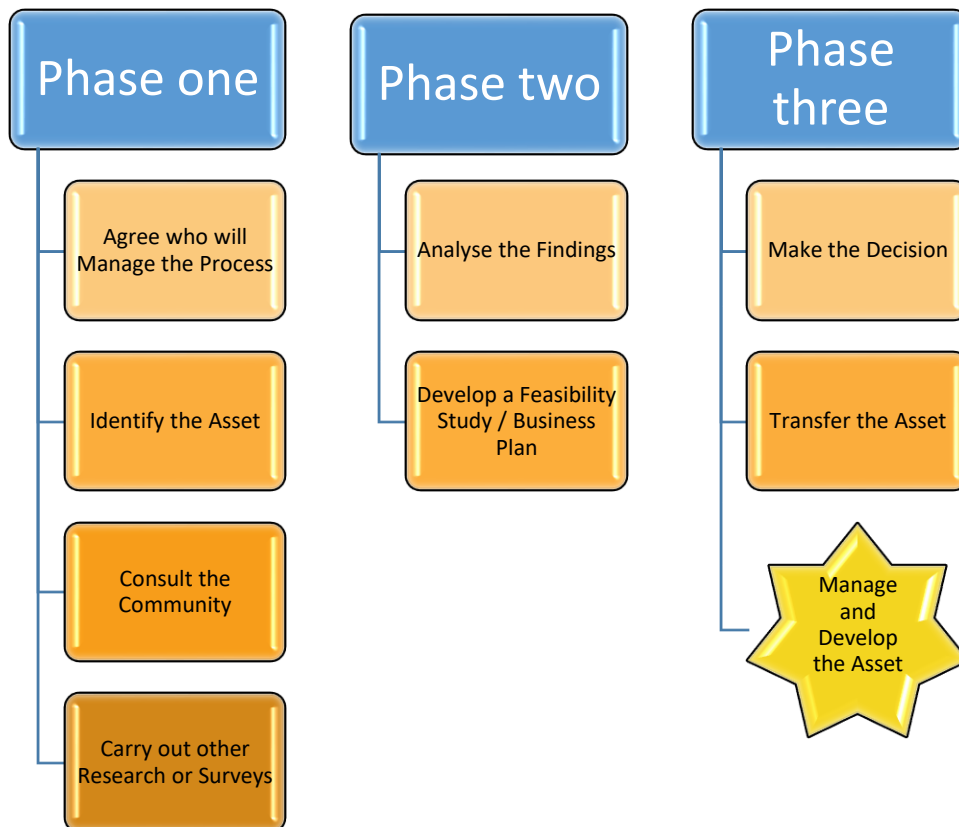
*Llanwddyn Community Centre*

# The Process

There are some essential actions that will help you decide whether, or not, to accept an asset under **Community Asset Transfer**. These actions fall into three phases of work, which are:

- **Phase one – Getting Going**
  - Agree who will Manage the Process
  - Identify the Asset
  - Consult the Community
  - Carry out other research and surveys
- **Phase two – Research and Plan**
  - Analyse the Findings
  - Develop a Feasibility Study / Business Plan
  - Make the Decision
- **Phase three – Manage the Asset (or Not)**
  - NO = Communicate the Decision
  - YES = Manage the Asset
  - Transfer the Asset

The diagram below shows how the phases and actions fit together, alongside some suggestions for tools and techniques as well as ideas on where you can find more information, help or support.

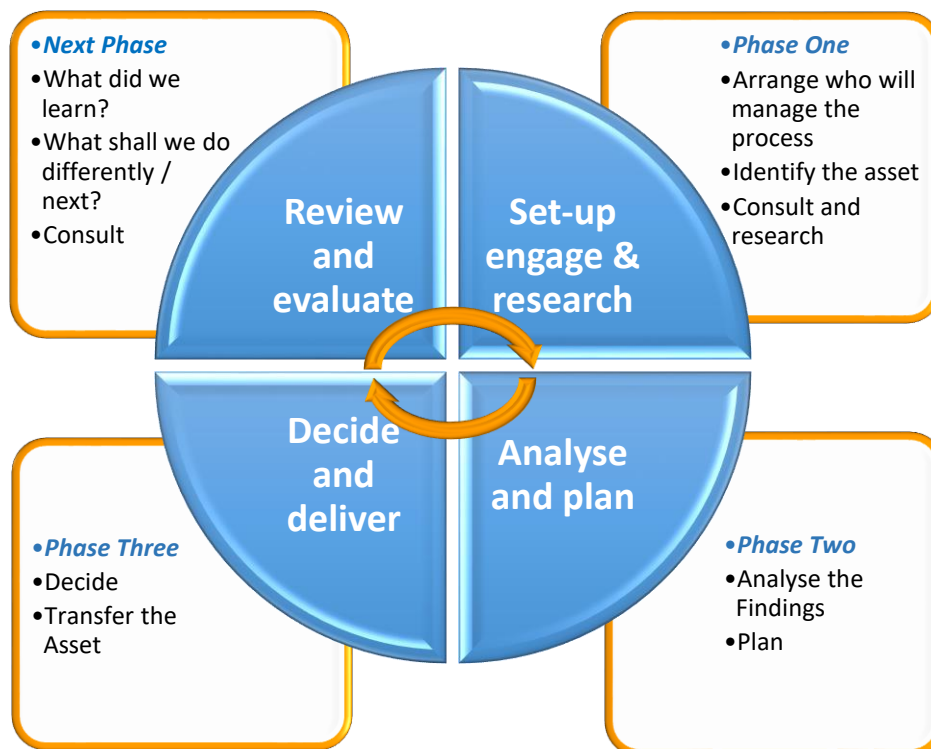


Complete the whole of each phase before you move onto the next, but you don't need to carry out the actions in each phase in order – we recommend that you follow the order in this Toolkit but you might find that changing the order of the actions within each phase might suit your situation better.

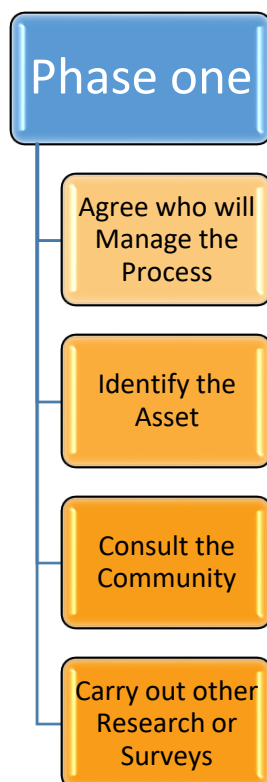
As you can see the process has a logic within it. In fact, when Community Asset Transfer projects fail, it is often because they have not followed this logical process.

The process set out in this Toolkit is based on a project planning cycle which is a tool which is used for all types of project planning. As you can see below, the process is a continuing cycle, and so if you wish to take on and run an asset, you must be prepared not only to consult, plan and take actions, but, also evaluate what you have done, in order to move forward into the future.

The diagram below shows this planning cycle and how it links to the phases and actions of the process described in this Toolkit:



## Phase One: Getting Started



Phase one is when you begin to consider whether, or not, to manage a **community asset**. It may be that:

- You have been offered an asset,
- You have identified an asset you would like to manage,
- You already lease the asset and the lease is due for renewal, or
- The asset is under threat of closure/sale.

Following this process will help you take your time and work out whether taking on the asset is the best decision and, if so, how everything will work. You may feel under pressure to take over the asset, indeed you may be put under pressure by the current owner working to their own timescale, or by a vociferous local campaign wishing to retain an asset for community use. Just take a breath and walk through the phases in this Toolkit step by step.

### *Action One: Agree who will Manage the Process*

Where an asset becomes available for transfer, there's a lot of work to be done, and it's best done by a group of local people. This might be an established group, like a Town or Community Council, an existing **charitable group**, or it might be an informal group of interested people who come together as a **steering group** just for the first phases of the asset transfer process.

Whoever it is, at this stage the group does not need to be **legally incorporated**. However, it's a good idea, even if you are an informal steering group to draw up some guidelines for how you will work together. Remember to include:

- The purpose of the group (often called the "objects"),
- How often you will meet,
- Who will do what, and
- How you will keep records of what you do.

Write this down, so all group members, other members of the community and any potential funders can understand it.

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

Llanwddyn Community Centre is owned by Powys County Council. It is managed by a local charitable group. In 2016, they began to discuss a new lease with Powys CC. The group was keen to retain the asset but some people were anxious about it being a liability, as the building was in some disrepair.



An informal steering group is great to start with but you might need money, for example, to help fund some actions. Once your group starts handling money you need to have a **governing document** making it very clear how you will be run and how the money will be looked after. Your group still might not need to be a legally constituted organisation, this will depend on how much money you have. If so, choose a **governance structure** that provides protection and support to its members in the short term, but also offers the best structure for what you want to do in the long term.

**Always seek professional legal advice about the most appropriate structure for you, bearing in mind what you plan to do.**

There are pros and cons to the different types of governance structure. The table below sets out the top pros and cons for the most commonly used structures.

Type of Governance Structure	Pros	Cons
<b>Registered Charity/Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)</b>	<p>Some funders will only fund charities.</p> <p>Provides an easily understood structure.</p> <p>CIO provides protection for the governing body (Trustees) as their liability is limited.</p>	<p>The reporting and processes can seem onerous.</p> <p>Takes time to become registered.</p> <p>Not as appropriate for those with no, or very low income.</p>
<b>Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee</b>	<p>Provides protection for the governing body (Directors) as their liability is limited.</p> <p>Well recognised by most funders.</p> <p>Useful for those without charitable objects.</p>	<p>The reporting and processes can seem onerous.</p> <p>Annual accounts may need to be prepared by an accountant.</p>
<b>Community Interest Company (CIC)</b>	<p>Useful for those that want to trade, or run social enterprises.</p> <p>Some limited funding available.</p>	<p>Not all funders will support CICs.</p> <p>Not as well known as charities</p> <p>The reporting and processes can seem onerous.</p>
<b>Co-operative / Mutual</b>	<p>All members have a share, and therefore an interest in making it work.</p> <p>Useful structure for generating interest and financial support in the community.</p>	<p>Some funders do not fund co-ops.</p> <p>Higher level of member / shareholder involvement may need managing.</p>

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

Llanwddyn Community Centre was already a registered charity (a CIO) and so did not need to form a new group, or agree a new governance structure.

As a rough rule of thumb, the first two examples are for groups that are not intending to **trade** as their main function; the second two are for groups that are. It is more difficult to obtain grant funding for trading groups or 'enterprises' as they are expected to be able to sustain themselves.



There are many organisations that can help and support you to work out what organisational structure is best for you and work through the process of becoming one. Including:

- [Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations \(PAVO\)](#) can provide model sets of governing documents.
- [Wales Co-op](#) will provide support on setting up a Co-operative.

## *Action Two: Identifying the Asset*

### **What and Where is the Asset**

You need to understand exactly what the asset is because you will want to have a plan showing what you are going to do in detail.

Right at the start be clear about what the asset is. Think through all the questions that you need answers for, to make sure you know what you might be getting and how to describe it. For example:

- If it is a building, is it the whole building, or only part?
- If there is any land attached to a building, how much of it will be transferred?
- Are you going to be responsible for boundaries, public rights of way, etc?
- Are there any plans for any retained and adjacent buildings or land?
- Might the access be shared and, if so, with whom?
- Are there any constraints on the property such as listing, covenants<sup>1</sup> or other restrictions of use?
- Are the gas, electricity or other utilities solely for your use?
- Will you be solely responsible for maintenance and upkeep?

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

In Llanwddyn, the Community Centre is a listed building, and attached to the former primary school, sharing utilities. Powys CC provided the group with a detailed plan of the building and surrounding grounds.

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<sup>1</sup> Some buildings that were donated to communities some years ago may have covenants restricting their use, typically forbidding activity such as dancing, gambling or the consumption of alcohol. Groups need to know about these early on within the process.



You will need to be provided with a map or plan from the current owner detailing the land or property and its boundaries. This will need to have sufficient detail for informed decisions to be made.

### *Action Three: Consult the Community*

This is an incredibly important job for any group thinking about asset transfer; by consulting the community you will:

- Find out the level of practical support available for the project – managing a community asset is hard work and needs lots of different types of skills. This might range from people willing to sign up to supporting the asset by using it regularly, through to people willing to commit time, effort and resources into managing and running the asset.
- Be able to show other people that the community supports the project - all funders will want to see local support for a project. They will ask questions like, “*How do you know there is a need for this building?*” They may also want to see your evidence of how and when local people were consulted. This helps funders to see how many, and what type of people were involved.
- Gather information to help you make the decision. If there is no real interest in retaining the asset, or alternatively, massive support, this will legitimise the decision any group makes, and de-personalise the conclusion.

It is easy to become anxious about making sure you get every single person in the community involved in the decision making, and become too focussed on the numbers of people taking part. What is really essential, is to make sure everyone in the community has ***the best possible opportunity*** to express their views, even though they may choose not to. You can do this by:

- Keeping what you do simple and straightforward,
- Offering a range of different ways for people to let you know what they think,
- Making sure you use methods that ensure all sections of the community are able to contribute their views,
- Using consultation activities that reach out to people rather than expecting them to come to you,
- Making it a fun process, and
- Involving lots of different types of people in working out how to consult and in consulting.

The main point of the consultation is to help you make decisions about whether, or not to go ahead with the transfer and what the future will look like if you do. To do this you will need to plan your consultation by thinking through:

- What you need to know,
- Who you need to ask, and
- How you need to ask them.

## What do you need to know?

Before you consult the community, you must think through what information, ideas and opinions you need to hear back from the community in order to help you make the decision and develop plans. Some of the key things you need to know about are:

- Is the asset going to be financially viable in the future and if so how?
- How are you going to manage it, what skills do you need, are there people in the community with these skills and will they help?
- What activities will you deliver within it and are there people in the community both to help deliver them and join in with them?
- Would people use the asset if it cost them more – if, for example, the costs of any repairs might put up the cost of hiring.

## Who do you need to ask?

The obvious answer to this is 'everybody in your community', but how do you know you are doing that?

It is helpful if the questions include personal information, which would be kept confidential. Typically, this would include ages, gender, location etc. In this way you can see, at the most basic level, whether you have covered people of

all ages and genders, and you can check if people from all locations are participating.

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

Llanwddyn Community Centre already hosts, sometimes in partnership with others, several successful events that attract people from the local area and further afield. They felt it would be useful to explore whether local visitors could be attracted to such events in the Centre, so consultation was undertaken at nearby caravan sites, cafes and with local hospitality businesses.

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

In Llanwddyn, the questionnaire asked people how near to the Community Centre they lived, their ages and gender, and questionnaires were available in Welsh and English.

You will know your community and can include questions relating to your particular circumstances, for example, ethnicity or whether people are Welsh speaking.

If you have ideas about what sort of activities will happen in the building then make sure you talk to all the people who might use it or help out. For example, if you think that a playgroup would be good for your community then remember to talk to parents of pre-schoolers about what they would need and if they can help run the group.

Consider how to consult other stakeholders that you might need to involve. Perhaps you want to develop an asset in a different way, and provide new services. For example, if you would like to develop facilities for hire, such as an

office, then consult likely users, which could be private businesses, or voluntary sector groups.

## How do you need to ask them?

### **Methods**

To get answers about the asset transfer from the community think through how best to get those answers.

Many groups begin consultation by holding **public meetings**, and are disheartened if the turnout is low, taking this as a sign of lack of interest. Whilst public meetings have a value they are not appropriate for everyone. For example, evening meetings can be difficult for those with young children or older people, and daytime meetings can exclude those at work.

Some of the ways that other communities have used include:

- Paper **questionnaires**,
- On-line questionnaires,
- Pin boards (on the street or at events),
- Individual interviews, e.g. door to door or at particular venues,
- Targeted interviews, in person, by phone or electronically, and
- Group discussions with existing community groups.
- **Focus groups**

### **Developing questions**

When you are developing a set of questions it is important to consider

- What value that question brings to the issue at hand?
- How will it be analysed?

It's really easy to get carried away and use the opportunity to ask a whole set of interesting questions that, in the end, don't add much to what you need to find out about. People are less likely to complete your survey, or will only partly complete it if it is too long and burdensome.

Questions should be clear and unambiguous. Write them and test them out on other people before you do the full survey – this way you can make sure you are getting the responses you meant to get. There are two main types of questions that can be asked – open and closed. **Closed questions** are those which have a yes/no response, and are the easiest to analyse, as they can be counted and expressed in numerical or percentage terms like this:

*Do you know about the community centre?*

YES/NO

It can also be helpful to include questions that will give you a numerical value when you count up the responses, like this:

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

In Llanwddyn, R4C worked with the group and designed a combination of online questionnaire, pin boards, individual interviews and targeted interviews, with R4C carrying out some parts, whilst guiding and supporting members of the group who used their skills and contacts to carry out much of the work.

*How often do you use the Centre?*

*Once or more a week / once or twice a month / once or twice a year / never*

You might also like to use questions where people can give you a score, like this:

*Do you think the Centre benefits our community? (Circle one score below)*

*1 (not at all)    2       3       4       5 (a great deal)*

If you use these types of questions, try to always have five options with number three being the average of your scale.

**Open questions** require people to tell you or write out their thoughts and ideas. These can be questions that stand alone or link to other questions. Ones that link to other questions provide you with a bit more information about a closed question. Like this:

*Do you think the Centre benefits our community? (Circle one score below)*

*1 (not at all)    2       3       4       5 (a great deal)*

*Tell us more about why you think that.*

Give people an opportunity to express views which they have not been able to do within the questionnaire by asking a final open question like this:

*Do have any other comments about the community centre?*

This avoids the criticism that the consultation methodology was skewed, because it only asked certain questions, and you often pick up useful quotes about what people in the community really think. You can use these quotes later in a funding application or in your publicity.

Aim for a balance of closed and open questions but remember the more open questions you ask, the longer the analysis will be.

**Remember** – all your questions should clearly relate to what you need to know to take on the asset, test its viability, manage it and / or deliver activities within it.



*Llanwddyn Steering  
Group members making  
plans with R4C*

### ***Involving everyone***

Think about what formats and languages might be needed in your community. For example, does the question need to be in Welsh and English?

It's a good idea to choose more than one method to consult with people. If you choose just one method it may affect whether, and how, people engage. For example, in some areas, older people may be less confident about using the internet, so an electronic survey may exclude them. The best thing is to find different methods to suit different people. Methods such as pin boards as well as one-to-one interviews at a place and time that is convenient to the people you want to consult, like a luncheon club or at the Post Office – this may be the most straightforward way of reaching people.

As the results start coming in you can check to see if all the different types of people in your community are responding and, if not, you can adjust what you are doing to suit them better. This makes the consultation more meaningful and representative. So, for example, if you review the responses and see that there are none from people under 18 years' old, you can try out new methods that will encourage them to respond, such as asking the youth workers or local school to carry out the questionnaire for you.



There is a lot of guidance written about consulting and engaging with local people in communities, and good organisations who can advise on the principles which underpin this, and practical ways of hearing people's views. Take a look at the [Participation Compass](#) and the [Scottish Standards for Community Engagement](#).

### ***Action Four: Carry out Other Research and Surveys***

While you are consulting with the community it is a good time to gather other information you might need to help you make the decision and plan.

There are two main types of information that you might need. Firstly, information about the asset and the condition of the asset and, secondly, information about the future management and running of the asset. As a minimum, you will need to understand;

- The legal ownership of the asset and what this will mean for you, for example what does the lease mean you can and cannot do, and what are your responsibilities?
- Information or a survey on the condition of the asset.
- The typical current running costs of the building, even when you plan to refurbish it in the future, it is a good idea to get an estimate of the costs of fuel etc.
- Information on all your legal responsibilities including insurance and health & safety, for example and what these might cost.



*Llanwddyn Steering Group  
members working on  
consultation, using pin boards*

## **Legal Ownership - Different types of legal agreements for managing property**

There are different types of legal structures, under which you can use and manage an asset, and they are summarised below, together with their advantages and disadvantages.

Type of Legal Agreements	Pros	Cons
<i>Licence to Occupy</i>	Useful for the short term - you have the right to occupy and use it, and any responsibilities will be written into the licence. Normally used for assets such as buildings near a planned development so the owner can gain some income, and the occupiers can use it over the short term.	Can be asked to vacate at short notice. Unlikely to get grants for the building .
<i>Short term Lease/ tenancy ( 1-5 years)</i>	Provides an opportunity to “try out” running an asset. May get grants for equipment – tables & chairs, etc. Can be renewed at the end of the period. Can be ‘handed back’ if things don’t work out.	Unlikely to get grants for any structural repairs. May feel insecure. The Council may not agree to a short term lease. There may be ongoing discussions and frustration over maintenance and repairs.
<i>Long term Lease / 25 years +</i>	Gives security to the community. Grant Funders can offer support with structural repairs and refurbishment. Often at a peppercorn (very low) rent. Community can carry out works in the way it wants. Likely to be able to renew the lease.	Some community members may be nervous of long term commitment. Full repairing obligations.
<i>Freehold ownership<sup>2</sup></i>	Community owns the freehold outright, and so feels more secure. Community can carry out works in the way it wants. In some cases can raise income against the asset.	Some community members may be nervous of long term commitment. Full repairing obligations.

**Remember** - with all these agreements there is likely to be a clause written into them, that, if a community group is unable to continue to manage the asset, then it will either be transferred to another community group (and remain for the benefit of the community) or be returned to the control of the original owner.

<sup>2</sup> Groups which have assets transferred to them to own outright will normally have a legal charge placed on the deeds to prevent them selling the asset without seeking the permission of the original owner.



Seek advice before entering into a legal agreement, and advice on how to choose a solicitor can be obtained from [The Law Society](#) or a local [Citizens' Advice Bureau](#).

### **Condition of the property, building or asset**

Taking on an asset is a major task, and you need to have a good understanding of the condition of the asset being considered for transfer – its condition may have important implications that you will need to consider in your decision.

Many community buildings are not in a good state of repair, and it is important for you to understand exactly what repairs and maintenance may be required in the short / medium / long term. The only way to do this is to have an **independent survey** from either a **Chartered Surveyor** or an **Architect** and, in some cases, other specialists such as a **Structural Engineer**, to provide a detailed report on the asset. This may be commissioned and paid for by the original owner such as the County Council.

The expert will come and look around the asset and make an assessment of its condition. It may be that not all the work can be costed at the time of the survey. This could be because the expert cannot report on the extent of the repairs needed without some exploratory work, or because access to some areas is not available, or is deemed too dangerous.

**This is not a service that should be provided on a casual basis (by a friend), or by someone who is not qualified, or by a member of the Local Authority's own staff (because they are not independent). An independent qualified surveyor is bound by professional standards and will carry insurance, so that you all have the security of an independent, indemnified piece of work.**



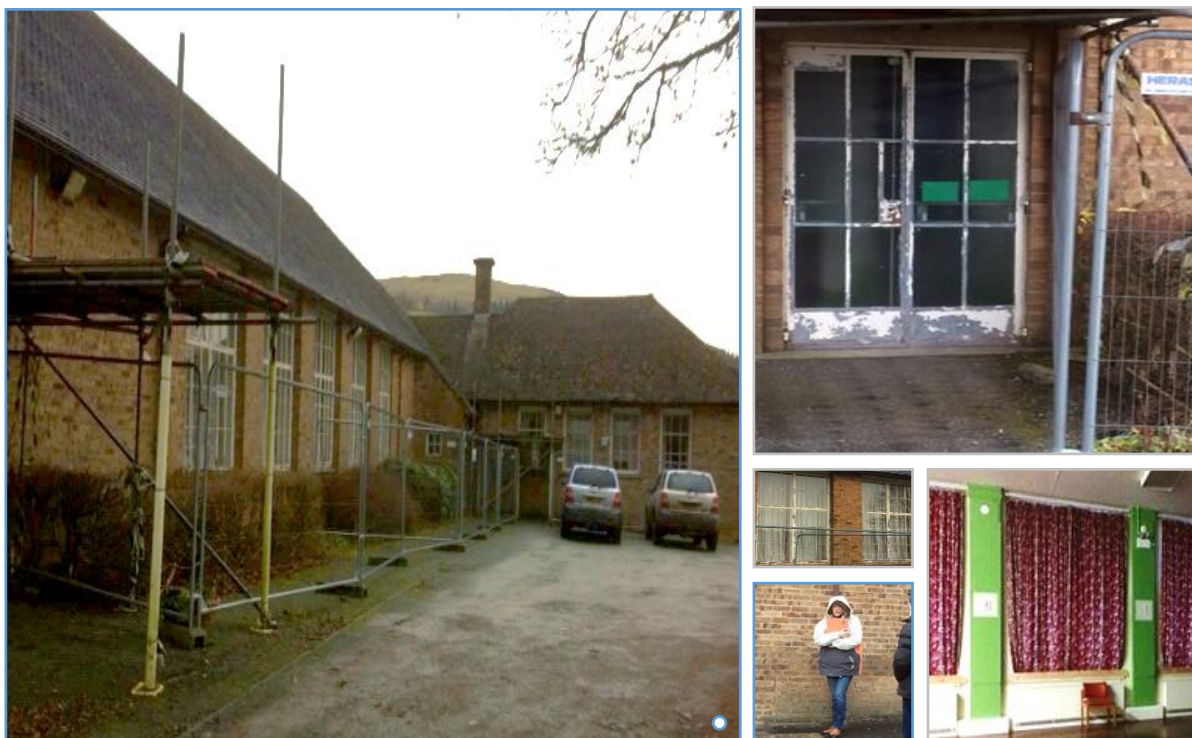
[The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in Wales](#) can help you find a firm of surveyors and help with other information. Also, ask around and visit other community groups so that you find a company you can work with effectively through the whole project. This person or company should have the contacts and knowledge within the local trades and the Local Authority to guide the work smoothly.

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

Llanwddyn Community Centre was provided with a report from an independent surveyor, which had already been commissioned by Powys County Council. This is because the building was known to be in some disrepair.

***It should not be assumed that the County Council will do this for all assets.***





External and internal condition of Llanwddyn Community Centre

### Costs of Repairs

When thinking about repairs it is important to look to the future. You do not want to aim to be continually ‘patching up’. If you do, the asset will continually deteriorate, and it can be very disheartening.

Once you know what state the building is in, you will need to be clear about any costs that might be needed for repair. Simple repairs can be estimated by a competent and experienced builder. However, most assets offered for transfer are in the type of condition that those costs need to be calculated more carefully. This can be done by a **Quantity Surveyor**, who will charge for the work.

Make it clear to the expert you employ, to survey the condition of the asset, that you need costs information too. They may offer a “ball park” figure verbally of the potential costs but this could be significantly different once the work is costed in detail, and will also vary according to the final specification.

**Remember**, any costs given verbally are only guidance not an accurate quotation.

**If you need to apply for a grant for the repairs then a grant-giving organisation will expect to see that the work has been properly planned and costed, by a Quantity Surveyor or some other recognised professional.**

Building costs calculated by a surveyor will give the security of knowing a reasonable price for the bulk of the work. (Most specialists, e.g. woodworm / damp treatment will give quotes at no cost.) This will help you be clear about what tradespeople you need and what you need them to do.

Therefore, when you ask for **quotations** for the costs of the work you can be clear about what you need and compare between quotes, seeing which are unreasonably high, or even too low, to complete the job satisfactorily.

### *Llanwddyn's Story*

In Llanwddyn the survey showed areas of asbestos. This needed dealing with by a specialist. The survey also identified areas 'presumed asbestos' because they were unable to examine some areas without damaging part of the fabric of the building.

If you are going to seek funding for repair work, and cannot be clear about the overall costs, because some areas are not able to be examined yet, you will need to explain this in the application, and build in an amount for contingency. Funders are not keen to offer significant contingency but, where costs are expected but cannot properly be assessed, it is reasonable to include this.

Try to get at least three quotes to make sure you get best value for your money. Some groups are obliged to do this, because it falls under their governing document and others will need to do this to secure a grant because of the funder's requirements. However, even where a

group is funding work themselves they should seek three quotations to ensure they get best value and demonstrate to the community that they are looking after the money well.

**Remember** an *estimate* is not legally binding, a *quotation* is. You should never accept a price and start carrying out works based on an estimate – always get a full quotation.



*Llanwddyn Community Centre – main hall and stage*

It may be possible to negotiate a grant towards the costs of repair with the Local Authority, or that they will undertake some repairs before the transfer takes place. However, the financial climate is so challenging that communities need to prepare for the reality of an asset which will be in less than ideal condition, and expect to undertake most of, if not all of, the repairs through their own fundraising efforts.

## Phase Two: Research and Plan



The consultation will give you a steer about taking on and managing the asset. Now it is time to think about what the information tells you, and how it will help you work out what to do next.

### Action One: Analysing the Findings

#### Consultation Findings

The ultimate decision on taking on the asset will lie with the group which is leading the work, it will be your job to assess and decide whether an asset is viable.

The consultation and research is there to give you some guidance, or a steer as you make decisions about taking on and managing an asset. Even though something is popular and scores highly in a consultation exercise it does not mean that it is a viable option, or that the group must adopt it or develop such a service. If you are responsible for the asset, you can also accept or reject these suggestions. As a first step collate all the results and then take some time to analyse or understand what the results are telling you.

When presenting the results of any consultation it is much clearer to the reader if the responses are shown in numerical or percentage terms, e.g. *90% of those consulted wanted to see the centre kept for the community*. However, in reporting back to the community, or to funders a brief report which includes quotes can have an impact, like this one:

*"If there wasn't a youth club I would never go out except to school"* said girl, aged 13.

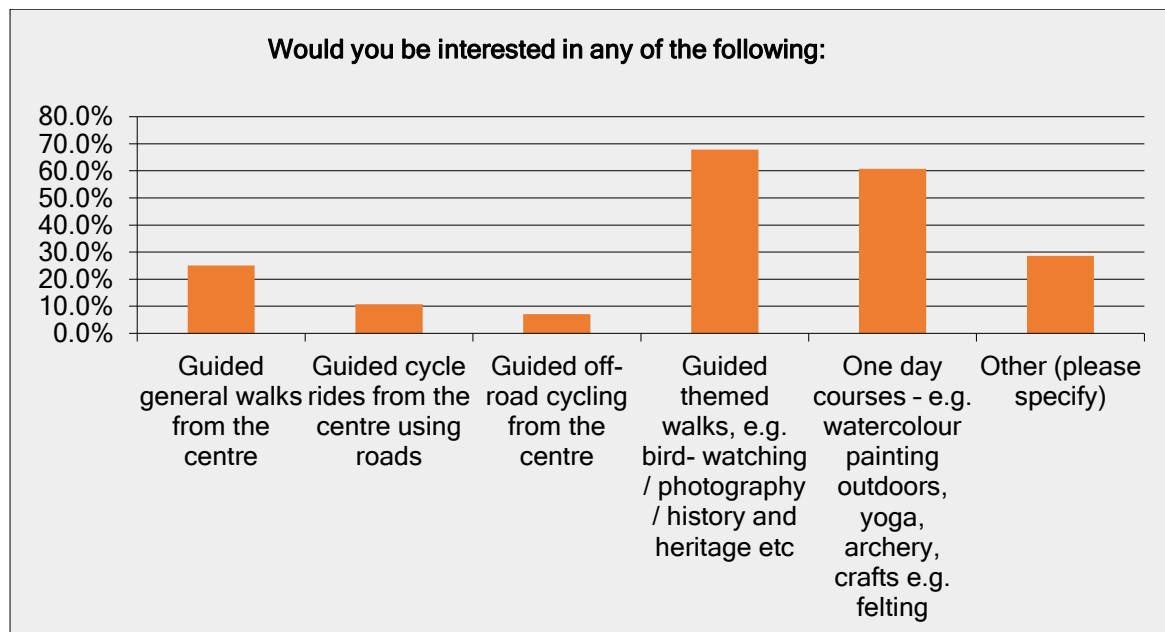
Where individual quotes are used, they should be used exactly as they have been written, or spoken to you.

The sort of questions we discussed above would give you the following type of written analysis in a report.

*"79% of people in our community knew about the centre and 21% did not. When people were asked how often they used the centre 42% used it once or more every week, 28% used it once or twice a month, 29% used it once a year and 19% had never used the centre. 16% of people thought that the centre did not benefit the community at all and 56% thought that it benefited the community a great deal. Of those who told us that the centre was of no benefit, the main reasons they gave were because of the poor state of repair of the building and the lack of activities for young people and children. Of those who thought it was of great benefit, the main reasons given were because of having a cheap venue to hire for celebrations and the luncheon club."*

Quote from a report on a community centre in England.

Once the analysis is complete, it is important to present the findings in a way which you and members of the community can understand. Some people find it easy to read written information, while others find it easier to look at charts and diagrams. Below is an example of a graph used in the feasibility report for Llanwddyn, and shows the responses given by visitors to inform the group about potential new activities at the Centre.



Once the results of the consultation have been compiled, and checked, then these can be used as part of the decision-making and planning process.



If you want to find out more about how to analyse the results of consultations take a look at the Northampton Consultation Toolkit which has a very useful section on how to [analyse what people have told you](#).

## Research, Survey and Other Findings

After all your experts have written their reports read through them, check you fully understand them, go back and ask questions if you want. Then it is helpful to summarise the most important information in key points. Keep this document as brief as possible.

At this point it is essential that your group takes a breath and has a pause to think about the two big questions that the information you have so far is telling you:

- Do we think this is viable and doable at this stage?
- Should we continue to the next Phase?



### Action Two: Developing a Feasibility Study / Business Plan

Once the results of the consultation, other research, surveys and information that has been gathered has been analysed, your group will need to discuss the results, find out what will work and plan what you will do next. The ‘finding out what will work’ part is called a **Feasibility Study** while ‘planning what we will do next’ is what goes into a **Business Plan**. A plan will help:

- Other people understand what you are doing,
- You understand and tell other people about what you are going to do, how and when,
- You to evaluate how you are doing, and
- Funders to be clear about what you are doing to be able to support you with funding.

These can be in one, or more, document(s) and in a format that is workable for you. It will be a tool for you to use and work on or update whenever you need to. It doesn't have to be complicated, or lengthy – in fact it is much better if it is brief and to the point.

Things you might need to think about including are shown in the table below:

Section	Contents
<b>Introduction</b>	Setting the context, so that someone who knows nothing about the area and the asset can understand it easily.
<b>Background</b>	A description of what you are setting out to do. What your study and / or plan will do and contain. Possibly a short summary of the history of the asset.

<b>Research Findings</b>	A short summary of what you know from the experts you have employed and the consultation. More detail on this can be included in the appendices.
<b>Alternatives and Options</b>	An overview of the proposals or options and their features A reason why you have chosen the final option.
<b>The proposal</b>	Summary of what you plan to do including the structure. This might include your mission, overall aim and your ‘objectives’ – that is what your hope and plan to achieve.
<b>Action Plan</b>	An Action Plan, saying what the group plans to do, by when, by whom, and identifies the resources needed. This can be divided into short, medium and long term actions, if appropriate, for example, where a group plans to take over an asset, run it, but subsequently develop it. This is usually presented as a table.
<b>Costs</b>	How much will everything cost – a summary of headline costs will do, provided you have the detailed costs written down somewhere else. If you prefer, these can be shown in an appendix.
<b>Timetable</b>	A timetable for reviewing the Action Plan.
<b>Evaluation</b>	An outline of what you will do to find out how well you are doing and what users and wider community think about it.
<b>Appendices</b>	Any additional, and relevant information, such as plans, information about the group, copies of leases, results of the consultation, communication and marketing plans.

The plan can be written in free text, or in table format, and you can use diagrams, pictures and quotes from your consultation. It is a working document that should be updated by your group as you go along. For example, you might like to keep the final column in your **Action Plan** to report on progress.

An **Action Plan** lays out everything that needs to be done to get going and stay going. It is worth spending a bit of time on this part to make sure you have everything in there and that it is all clear and easy to follow.

Below is an extract of a table used in an Action Plan, taken from the one prepared for Llanwddyn.<sup>3</sup>

Action	Who	Resources needed	Deadline	When reviewed
Agree and sign new lease with Powys CC	Charity trustees and Powys CC	Legal advice cost@ £250	End August 2017	September committee meeting

<sup>3</sup> Some details have been changed as the original identifies individuals.



<b>Begin to prepare draft application for funding</b>	Three named committee members, with advice from PAVO	Time	September 2017	September committee meeting
<b>Complete and submit application for funding from XXXX trust fund</b>	Three named committee members, with advice from PAVO	Plans costed, copies of accounts, lease, etc, time	End November 2017	Result due February 2018, so March 2018.

The **objectives** and planned actions should to be written so they meet the acronym 'SMART'. This means that when you think about and write objectives and actions they need to be:

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	you need to be specific with your idea and not be vague or "woolly"
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	it must be measurable in terms of outputs and / or cost
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>	it needs to be something you can actually do
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic</b>	it needs to be something that is within your control
<b>T</b>	<b>Timed</b>	the action must be able to be completed within a specified time

If the objectives and actions you develop are checked against this acronym, you are more likely to be successful.

So, for example, if we look at the Action Plan above the action in the first row is:

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific</b>	the new lease agreement will be agreed and signed.
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	the lease is either signed, or not.
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable</b>	this gives sufficient time for all involved to agree the lease and people have agreed that it should be done.
<b>R</b>	<b>Realistic</b>	signing a lease is the first step in managing this asset, and signing the lease is within the control of the board.
<b>T</b>	<b>Timed</b>	the lease needs to be signed, before applications for grants are made as, without it, applications will be unsuccessful although work can begin on a draft whilst the lease negotiations are underway. This should provide the exact date the lease needs to be signed by.

When the Business Plan is written, time should be set aside at each committee meeting to review the actions. Where some matters have slipped, as they inevitably will, a revised time will need to be set. In this way, the project to develop the asset will remain focused and will be more likely to succeed.



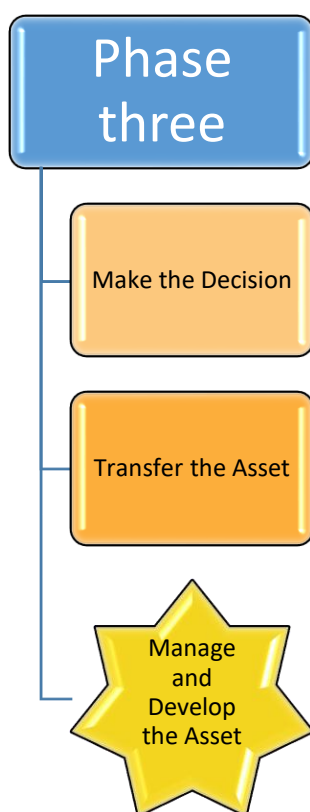
### *Llanwddyn's Story*

In Llanwddyn, Resources for Change included a brief draft Action Plan as part of the feasibility study, for the Centre committee to build on and adapt to their own needs.



There is lots of advice and support available to help you write a Business Plan, and to look at options that are right for your exact circumstances and the needs of your community. If you are employing someone to help, you need to find someone who will do it **with** you and not **for** you – that way it will be **your** plan. Funders are not keen to make grants to groups who have got someone else to write their Business Plan for them. They have concerns that, if a group cannot write its own business plan, would it be able to manage an asset? There is a lot of [good information here](#) to make a start.

## Phase Three: Manage the Asset (or Not)



By now you will definitely know if what you wanted to do is viable and has community support. Based on this, you can now make your final decision on whether, or not, to go ahead.

### *Action One: Make the Decision*

So, now you have a choice, based on all you have learned or found out - **are you going to manage the asset or not?**

### **No - Deciding not to Proceed**

Deciding not to proceed with transferring an asset is a very difficult decision. Members of a group making such a decision may feel they are letting the community down. However, sometimes it is the best decision, especially where as asset is not viable, or the support to manage and run the asset is not there. Before making this decision final it may be helpful to feed this back to the community, either through a public meeting, or through other types of communication, such as a local newsletter or social media. If this is laid out in a factual way, the community will understand and appreciate the honesty and the effort you have made. Below is an example of how this might look.

The committee working on the asset transfer of the village hall has, reluctantly, come to the conclusion that it is not feasible.

We are very disappointed after all the hard work, and know you will be too.

The reasons, mainly financial, are on our website and there is a paper copy at the library.

Some of the main reasons are:

- *To make the hall viable we would need to charge £20 an hour for the main hall (current charge £4). This would mean many groups could not afford to use it.*
- *The work needed to bring the building up to standard will cost over £900,000. Although some people suggested we demolish the building and re-build, this would be difficult because it is listed.*
- *Although we tried hard, with only five of us on the committee, we didn't feel we could do anything further without additional support.*

IF ANY OTHER PEOPLE WANT TO START A GROUP TO LOOK AT TAKING THE HALL OVER, WE ARE HAPPY TO SHARE ALL THE INFORMATION WE HAVE GATHERED OVER THE PAST 9 MONTHS.

## Yes – Manage the Asset

If your research backs up your plans and ideas, it's time for the fun and hard work of getting on with the job of managing your transferred asset.

### *Action Two: Transfer the Asset*

Take all the necessary legal steps and sign the agreements that are needed to transfer the asset to your care.

### *Action Three: Manage and Develop the Asset*

KEEP IT FUN! Plus remember to keep your action plan under review and developing all the time, involve the community and keep a close eye on the finances.

You should set aside one meeting a year to evaluate how you are doing in terms of the overall project, and could use this to report back to the community. This could be in the form of a newsletter, or a simple pictogram, as the one overleaf.



There are lots of resources to help you manage a community building. One good place to start is [Managing your Community Building](#) and PAVO can also offer advice and assistance on this.

*This toolkit ends here – managing an asset is over to you, but remember the following*

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

— **Benjamin Franklin**

And here's a final question for you...

What is the shortest word in the English language that uses the Letters ABCDEF ???

PTO

Answer: FEEDBACK - remember to tell people how you are doing - here's one way

# ANYWHERE VILLAGE HALL

## COMMUNITY REPORT 2016

### Progress

#### WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO

- ★ Complete the work on the new toilets
- ★ Start a new exercise class
- ★ Run the lunch club for an additional session
- ★ Sort out the outside play area

#### WHAT WE DID

- ★ Toilets up and running by April 1st
- ★ Two new exercise classes – Zumba and Bowls
- ★ Lunch club now twice a month
- ★ Applied for grants for play equipment, not successful. Fundraised over £5k with your help.

*"I love having a lunch out with old pals twice a month"*

*John 82*

*I've lost a stone since joining Zumba!!*

### WHAT WE PLAN TO DO NEXT YEAR

- Carry on looking for funding for the outside play area – cost £30k in total
- Re-furbish the kitchen with a new cooker and a super-fast DISHWASHER!!
- Get more volunteers – on the committee, or to raise funds, or help at the carnival
- Put on two events for children, one at Easter, one at Halloween

Tell us what you think  
Use the Centre Facebook page  
Send us an email  
Talk to any of the committee

## Sources of Further Advice and Information

There are lots of places to go for more information, here are just a few. Click on the links to find out more.

Theme	Sources of Advice
<b>About setting up, and running a group</b>	<a href="#">Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO)</a> <a href="#">Powys County Council Community Regeneration Team</a> <a href="#">Wales Co-op Centre</a> <a href="#">Development Trusts Association Wales (DTA Wales)</a> <a href="#">Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)</a> <a href="http://www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/getting-started">http://www.wcva.org.uk/advice-guidance/getting-started</a>
<b>Technical Advice</b>	Royal Institute for British Architects - <a href="http://www.riba.org.uk/">http://www.riba.org.uk/</a> Legal advice - <a href="http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/">http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/</a> Surveyors - <a href="http://www.rics.org/uk">www.rics.org/uk</a>
<b>For advice on Listed Buildings</b>	<a href="#">CADW (CADW)</a> <a href="#">Powys County Council Conservation Officer</a>
<b>Advice on Grant Funding</b>	<a href="#">Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO)</a> <a href="#">Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)</a> <a href="http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search">http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search</a> <a href="#">BIG Lottery Fund</a> <a href="#">Heritage Lottery Fund</a> <a href="#">Arts Council for Wales</a> <a href="#">Sport Wales</a>

## Glossary

Key Word	Definition
Action Plan	A document that lists what steps must be taken in order to achieve a specific goal. The purpose of an action plan is to clarify what resources are required to reach the goal, formulate a timeline for when specific tasks need to be completed and determine what resources are required.
Architect	A trained and qualified person and usually a member of the RIBA who designs buildings and in many cases also supervises their construction.
Business Plan	A written document that describes in detail how a business is going to achieve its goals. A business plan lays out a written plan from a marketing, financial and operational viewpoint.
Charitable group / Registered Charity	An organisation established and operated for charitable purposes, and must devote its resources to charitable activities.
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	A new structure that allows charities to operate both as a company and a charity with only one registration and accountable body – previously charitable organisations that wanted to trade would have to be both registered charities and companies.
Chartered Surveyor	Professional Members and Fellows of RICS who are trained and experienced in carrying out buildings surveys to report on the condition of buildings.
Closed question	Questions that can be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and aim often to seek out a fact or numerical type answer.
Community Asset Transfer	A change in management and / or ownership of land or buildings, from public bodies, (most commonly local authorities), to communities, (community and voluntary sector groups, community enterprises, social enterprises or similar.
Community Interest Company (CIC)	A new type of company designed for social enterprises that want to use their profits and assets for the public good.
Consulting	A planned process of engaging directly with an identified group of people with the purpose of finding out their views. The process can take many forms and cover a broad range of activities; it must ensure consideration is taken of the diversity that exists within any community.
Cooperative / Mutual	An organisation owned by the members who use its services (a consumer co-operative or credit union), or by people who work there (a worker co-op), or by those who live there (a housing co-operative). An organisation where the assets are held in common by the members.
Feasibility Study	A report that considers a proposed project to determine if it is technically feasible, affordable, and if it will be financially viable.

Focus group	A facilitated process in which a group of people work through some questions and / or exercises, and discuss an idea, product or service.
Freehold ownership	Outright ownership of a property for perpetuity where the owner can use the property for any purposes, in accordance with the local regulations.
Governance structure	The system of rules, practices and processes by which an organisation and its resources are directed and controlled.
Governing document	The formal documents that set out an organisation's purposes, how it will operate and make decisions.
Legally incorporated organisation	An organisation that is a registered corporate body that has certain responsibilities under law and are accountable to a Regulator. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company by Guarantee</li> <li>• Community Interest Company (CIC)</li> <li>• Charitable Incorporated Organisation</li> </ul>
Licence to Occupy	A licence to occupy is a legal agreement between the licensor (the property owner) and the licensee (the person seeking to occupy the property), giving the licensee the right to occupy the property for a defined length of time.
Long term lease	A legal agreement allowing use of a property from a landlord for longer than one year.
Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee	A company that does not earn profits for its owners. All the money earned by, or donated to, a not-for-profit company must be used in pursuing charitable objectives and keeping the company running.
Objectives	A specific result that a person or system aims to achieve within a time frame and with available resources.
Open question	Questions that seek out thoughts, opinions and ideas and require a longer answer.
Public meeting	A way for people to come together to express their opinions, hear a speaker, or plan a strategy. They can build a feeling of community and attendance levels provide an indicator of the level of interest within a community on a particular issue.
Quantity Surveyor	A trained and qualified person who calculates the amount of materials needed for building work, and how much they will cost.
Questionnaire	A set of written questions devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study.
Quotation	A formal statement setting out the cost for a specific job or service.
Short term lease / tenancy	A legal agreement which gives use of a property owned by the landlord for a set period of less than six months.
Steering group	A group of people who meet regularly to manage a process, set priorities and make decisions.
Structural Engineer	A trained and qualified civil engineer dealing primarily with the design and construction of structures and buildings.
Survey	An examination of the condition, value and situation of a property.
Trade	Buying or selling goods and / or services.